

Presented by ... Class ... 1857
Hubbard (G. H.)

"TRUTH LEADS TO SUCCESS."

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GRADUATING CLASS

AT THE

DARTMOUTH MEDICAL COLLEGE

AT

HANOVER, N. H.

NOV. 11th, 1857.

BY GEORGE H. HUBBARD, M. D.

EDITOR OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE.

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DARTMOUTH MEDICAL COLLEGE, }
Hanover, N. H., Nov. 11, 1857. }

DR. GEO. H. HUBBARD,

DEAR SIR :—At a meeting of the Medical Faculty, this A. M., a unanimous vote was passed, requesting Dr. Hubbard to publish his interesting and instructive lecture on “Truth an element of Success.”

Respectfully Yours,

A. B. CROSBY,
For the Faculty.

DARTMOUTH MEDICAL COLLEGE, }
Hanover, N. H., Nov. 11, 1857. }

DR. HUBBARD,

DEAR SIR :—After the exercises at the College this morning, there was a meeting of the Graduating Class, when a resolution was introduced, and unanimously carried, that a committee of three should be appointed to request Dr. Hubbard to publish in the N. H. Journal of Medicine, his able Address, delivered before the Class just previous to the conferring of the degrees.

Yours with respect,

R. F. ANDREWS,
A. H. CARR,
J. M. RAND,
Committee for the Class.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN : — Having safely passed the great crisis of your lives, it is fitting that whatever I may say to you should be concerning your future professional career.

Every event in life is the natural result of an antecedent cause. The affairs of men are just as strictly governed by fixed laws as are the motions of the planets, and it is as impossible to succeed in a course of conduct which violates these laws, as to suspend the laws which govern organic matter.

My young friends, if I can impress upon your minds the truth of this proposition, and the necessity of so governing yourselves that your lives may harmonize with kind Nature's laws, I shall have been called here to some good purpose.

Success in life is entirely dependent upon the relation our conduct bears to the Divine attribute TRUTH, on which is founded all the principles which should govern us as men and as physicians.

Truth demands obedience to the law which governs human existence, while Falsehood leads to its violation. Truth is the simple and perfectly reliable test by which we are to judge our own conduct and that of others. Truth is the *only* test by which human life and human actions are to be tried and judged and Truth is *the test* by which your lives, as men and as physicians, will be judged, not only by your Creator, but by your fellow men.

This being the case, if you are wise, you will so arrange your lives

that they may stand this test. Think not that I am about to read you a homily on your moral relations and duties, for I will do so no farther than is necessary to show, as I shall endeavor to, that your success in life depends upon squaring your actions by this test of truth. It is my desire to convince you that it is vain to hope for success but by a rigid adherence to Truth, Right, and Justice. If you would succeed, adopt the old Latin precept : *Magna est Veritas et Prævalabit*. It is a very old motto, but by physicians should be ever borne in mind and its teachings never disregarded ; for I can assure you that whoever comes to regard it as a stale precept is in great danger of failing in his dearest aspirations for professional success.

Allow me to look forward upon your professional lives, try your conduct and measure your success by this *test of Truth*

You have obtained your degree and title of Doctor by convincing your examiners that you are good and true men, and qualified for the important trust confided to you. If you are really such, there is nothing to fear and ultimate success is certain ; but if by any cunning, artifice or imposition you have unworthily obtained this honor, you may well tremble for your position. However much you may be satisfied with your present success, be assured that "Truth is most powerful and will ultimately prevail."

Much has been said of the duties and qualifications of medical men and the course of conduct necessary to success. Now success, as applied to the life of a physician, means two very different conditions, according to the light in which it is viewed. While to most people, that man only is called successful who has been able to put money in his purse — we know of many who have lived and died in poverty, yet were really and eminently successful as physicians and public benefactors.

If money, fame or power is the aim of your lives, you have grievously erred in your choice of a profession. If you have strong aspirations for either of these, you cannot too soon abandon scientific pursuits, and enter upon other and more direct roads to their acquisition.

Professional success is as incompatible with great personal selfishness, as it is incompatible with that disregard for Truth and Honesty so commonly found in very selfish men.

But the temptation to cheat your way into the profession, has

been slight in comparison to the temptation to vary from the truth, which will beset your early professional career.

That period of the life of a young physician when he is waiting for practice is not only the most unhappy but also the most dangerous. 'Tis hard to drag out months of seemingly useless existence; to look on and see men notoriously our inferiors enjoying that favor and patronage to which we feel ourselves clearly entitled; and that the temptation to secure that favor by some questionable artifice, is too often irresistible, is not so much a matter of surprise, as of regret. To be able to withstand these temptations you must be determined to try them by the test of truth, and abide the decision.

If true to yourselves, you will not spend these months of waiting in idleness. There is full occupation for every hour. Your knowledge of disease at the best must be very imperfect, and an industrious employment of all your time is needed to carry on that professional education which is now but fairly begun, and which should never cease but with your lives. There can be no more pitiable being than the physician who has finished his education.

During this trying period of your career you will meet with annoyances and discouragements so unexpected and so apparently unjust as to tempt you to retaliation. Friends on whom you fondly depend to start you in practice, will coolly employ your rivals, and it will require all your firmness and resolution to remain true to yourselves and quietly submit to what is really only an annoyance, but which will appear to you as a personal injury.

Perhaps one of these friends will employ you, and a case trivial in itself becomes of undue importance; to you from your personal anxiety; to the patient and friends because of their lack of confidence in your professional capacity. This lack of confidence is only to be dispelled by showing them that you are in *truth* as well as in name a good physician.

You may be tempted to magnify the danger of the case that your credit for the cure may be greater, or, from fear of being superseded, to give unwarrantable assurances of a favorable termination.— Either deviation from truth is dangerous, and will eventually result in your injury. The public are very shrewd in detecting attempts to impose upon them, and they soon become suspicious of the physician whose patients are *all* very sick, yet *all* recover. On the oth-

er hand, it is better to lose the care of a dangerous case than to have it terminate unfavorably contrary to your prognosis.

An open, candid, straight-forward course is the only safe course. It leaves you free to sleep o' nights, while falsehood and duplicity require continual vigilance to escape the detection which is sure eventually to overtake their victims.

But you must not conclude that an honest course will command success if unaccompanied by some manifestation of merit, for "sometimes Virtue starves while Vice is fed," and that truth, which is sure to prevail, is not confined to your habits of speaking, but is *true merit* in its broadest sense.

It is not enough for you to possess merit; the fact must be known or there is small chance to make it useful to yourselves or others.

How is this to be done? Not by a brawling, boastful display of your acquirements, for, although by so doing you may gain a temporary advantage, it is a false course, and will eventually fail.

If you start with a fixed purpose to hold fast and abide by the true and right, you need never be at a loss as to your true course of conduct; the truth will manifest itself so plainly as never to be mistaken.

On the contrary, if you allow yourselves to vary from strict truth in pursuit of some temporary advantage, it will not be long before your ideas of right and wrong as regards your own conduct, will become so indefinite and confused that you will be left to follow every temptation to wrong, however trivial may be the gratification or gain promised.

The public will watch your acts, and will judge you much more justly by what you *do*, than by what you *say*. Therefore, when you find yourselves located, instead of endeavoring to talk up a reputation, go diligently to work to make yourselves worthy of one; and fear not if you are so, and are true to yourselves and your profession, you will soon have all the reputation you deserve.

Sensible people will be much more favorably impressed if they find you laboring to remedy the deficiencies of your education, than by any boasts of learning made by yourselves or friends.

If you have merit as physicians, you will have opportunity ere

long to manifest it at the bedside, where will be put to test your boasted powers, and you will be judged by those shrewd to discern the true and detect the false.

To be prepared to acquit yourselves creditably at the bedside, you must cultivate a habit of diligent and patient investigation. Carefully study your cases; not in any one book, but in all to which you have access; compare the written case with that presented to your view; wake up all your perceptive faculties, that you may if possible learn something from the *real* case which is not recorded in the books.

Watch the effect of your remedies, taking into consideration all the incidental circumstances which would modify their action; discover if possible the cause of any unexpected phenomena, that you may be prepared to anticipate and prevent such in future.

Such care and study of a single case will do you more real good than to read volumes in an indifferent and listless manner; and the study of all your cases in this manner cannot fail to make you eminent in your profession.

Another mode of searching for truth is much too often neglected, especially by country practitioners. I allude to making post-mortem examinations in all proper cases, more especially where there has been a want of plain diagnostic symptoms.

The popular prejudices against these examinations are fast dying out, and the better classes of society are quite as ready to grant as the physician to propose them.

In many cases you may not only satisfy yourself as to the real cause of death, but what is often of greater consequence, you may satisfy the surviving friends, and often retain by this means the confidence of a family which you would otherwise lose.

The recorded results of post-mortem examinations have changed Medicine from a speculative into a comparatively exact science.—Most of your observations will be eluded by more or less uncertainty; but a post-mortem examination made by a good anatomist, reveals the consequences of disease, and corrects or verifies the diagnosis, leaving as a result, an addition of facts to our stock of knowledge.

By these examinations, conducted in a proper manner, you have an advantage over quacks and imposters, who rarely, if ever, make

them, being prevented as much by a well-grounded fear that they may reveal their impositions, as by their ignorance, which would render any developments of pathological anatomy unintelligible.

I would not be understood to deny that you may make your way by humbugging the public; for that falsehood and deception are the shortest roads to notoriety, is shown us every day. But who of you has no higher aspirations than to gain the noisy applause of the unthinking portion of community, or will be content with a false reputation, which must be continually glossed over by new falsehoods?

A reputation founded on true merit will be of slow growth, and when once acquired will stand the test of time; while the fame or notoriety which has not truth for its basis is but a transient affair, which leaves its possessor in a worse condition than before.

In order to discharge your duties as *true* physicians, it is necessary that you be prepared for, and qualified to treat, every disease or accident to which the human frame is liable. It is useless to try to shun difficult or dangerous diseases or to refuse to treat surgical cases which require courage and a high degree of professional knowledge. It is the manner in which you treat these cases which will decide your standing with the public.

If you shrink from your proper responsibilities in time of difficulty and danger, the public will be perfectly just to conclude that you do so on account of your incompetence, and you will have no reason to complain if you are considered inferior to your neighbor, who has the moral courage to stand true to his responsibilities in the hour of trial. Many men have pusillanimously yielded to their inferiors for want of the moral courage to be true to themselves.

Let me not be understood as urging you to *crowd* yourselves into places of responsibility. If you study to keep in your *true* position, you will never crowd yourselves at all, but will wait for the natural course of events to bring up opportunities for action.

These opportunities will not fail to appear; soon enough if you are truly prepared for them, and quite too soon and too often if you allow yourselves to change a true for a false position. By a false position, I mean any condition in which you may be placed by a failure to stand up to the rigid standard of right which I have mentioned.

Not only will this test of truth guide you in shaping your course of conduct as men and as physicians, but it is the test by which to try all remedies and modes of treatment.

The whole difference between the inductive philosophy of the present day and the wild speculations of the past is that now we judge professed facts and theories by this test, and are taught to disregard whatever is found deficient when thus judged. So should you judge every new theory of practice or mode of medication.

From this general view of the necessity of making truth your guide, let us pass to consider its relation to the popular medical heresies of the day. Of these, most prominent, because most successful, is Homœopathy.

The recognition of a few well-established truths will show us why this imposition has flourished; and it seems impossible that any person of ordinary intellectual capacities, can be misled by its pretensions, after being shown their utter falsehood.

The experience of every practitioner of medicine goes to show that a very large proportion of all cases of sickness eventually recover. That the percentage of fatal cases is small, whether well treated, ill treated, or not treated at all. This being the case, it is not to be expected that the public can very well determine under which mode of treatment the percentage is greatest, and it is perfectly natural that very slight circumstances should influence the current of popular favor.

To most people, disease is an identity which hinders the operations of the human machine, just as a little dirt will hinder the motion of a time-piece, and is to cast out by the doctor's drugs, just as the tinker removes dust from the wheels of a watch. They know nothing of the laws which govern the economy, of the processes of reasoning by which the true physician comes to his conclusions as to the violations of those laws, or the processes to be gone through to bring the sick body to a state of health. They only know that they are sick; nature instinctively demands aid to recover, and as instinctively looks for that aid to those who profess to be able to render it. It is consequently the most natural thing in the world for sick people to call to their aid those who make the loudest professions of ability, and who make the least calls on them for the exercise of that trying virtue, self-denial.

This being the case, it is not at all strange that a system of practice bearing externally so pleasant an aspect as Homœopathy, should become excessively popular, and remain so in spite of its many and glaring faults and vices.

There is a class of people who have cultivated their sensibilities at the expense of their intellects ; by whom plain common sense is voted flat, stale and unprofitable. They are called the fashionable world. Truth is to them an obsolete idea. The real facts which have stood the test of time, are disregarded, and he who would weigh the truth against the dictates of fashion is declared old foggy and vulgar.

Fashion delights in romantic and mysterious assumptions ; and to fashionable people there is something irresistibly attractive in becoming disciples of a mystery which neither they or others can understand. Fashion has decided that her votaries must not be cured by the unpalatable drugs of the apothecary, but by the genteel potentizations of a transcendental mystification.

To fashionable people there is something sufficiently romantic and attractive in this mystical philosophy, and the idea of being cured by pellets of sugar, to overcome the cautiousness which should restrain people of common sense from trying unwarrantable experiments ; and if a few lose their lives, it is considered sweet and becoming to die a sacrifice at the shrine of their divinity.

That the advent and reign of this humbug is to be of value to medical science and to the human race, I firmly believe ; but it is in the same way as wars and revolutions benefit the human race, by developing great truths at the expense of immense individual suffering and the loss of vast numbers of human lives.

I feel to judge it righteously, giving it credit for all its good, but holding it strictly to account for its short-comings, especially its falsehood, hypocrisy, and the want of moral honesty which it induces in its disciples.

In the first place, it was the dreamy chimera of a disordered brain ; was originally a lie, and has gradually drawn to its association those vices which go hand in hand with falsehood the world over. Its practitioners have no claim to be considered honest. How glaring the falsehood of the whole farce ! They send their students here to learn a pathology which they affect to despise — a system of therapeutics which they profess to ignore.

They profess to be governed by certain hypothetical principles, but which every man who watches their practice finds they abandon at the first approach of danger. Cases in *proof* of this are abundant.

The most audacious of their impositions upon popular credulity is the excuse they make, or reason they give, for using the most active drugs in enormous doses;—that it matters not in how large doses medicines are given, if administered homœopathically; or, in the language of the *British Journal of Homœopathy*:—“the whole question of doses is left open to the discretion of the physician, who may be as strictly a homœopathist as Hahnemann himself, though he should give his medicines in the ordinary form, simply if he select them according to their homœopathic fitness.”

What this means is past an ordinary comprehension, unless it means that the patient must be cajoled by the mystifications of homœopathy while dosed by the well tried medicines of the scientific physician.

This brings us to the two classes of cases which recover under the care of self-styled homœopathic practitioners.

Firstly, the great mass of symptomatic and self-limited diseases which recover if well nursed, and kept on the spare diet which is so rigidly prescribed by these practitioners. These are the *real* cures of homœopathy.

Secondly, those cases which fall into the hands of self-styled homœopaths, who know enough of medicine to enable them to treat and cure by active remedies really dangerous diseases. There are multitudes of such homœopathic practitioners. Possibly some of you are intending to pursue a like course. To any such I would say, stop and consider if you are willing to acquire wealth by a life of deception and falsehood; if you can coolly make up your minds to take the position of deliberate practical deceivers for the rest of your lives. If so, you are just the men for homœopathic practitioners.

But we have gained much from this humbug called homœopathy. We have learned that the tendency of most cases of sickness, if left uninfluenced by medical treatment, is towards recovery; that the recuperative powers of the human system are much greater than was formerly supposed; that the percentage of deaths in all the ordinary cases of sickness, if treated by rest and abstinence alone, would be very trivial; that in most cases we owe more to the recuperative powers than to drugs, and that true practice is to aid these powers, rather than to attempt to cure by drugs alone. We have learned that minute sub-division increase the efficiency and practi-

cal value of drugs. It will be well to push our investigations in this direction and learn the true value of trituration, however much we may despise the insipid twaddle about attenuations and potentizations.

It will not pay at this time to follow up and try by the test of truth all the phases of quackery, but it will be profitable for you to do so at your leisure. We will however trace from its birth to its present condition the root and herb system which has had a long succession of names from that of Thomsonian, derived from its originator, to the arrogantly assumed title of Eclectic.

Samuel Thomson started with the crude proposition that "heat is life, and cold is death." On this and a few collateral propositions he based a system of practice, the indications of treatment in which, consisted mainly of the use of the vapor bath, capsicum and lobelia. Its apparent simplicity and adaptation to the comprehension of the most ignorant, caused it to be vastly popular, especially among the lowest and most prejudiced classes of society.

This difference in the adaptation of this system and homœopathy to the two extremes of community, has been happily described by the lamented Bartlett, who called the one the philosophy of the drawing room, the other that of the barn-yard,

The outrageous abuses of this system soon caused it to sink into disrepute and its practitioners either returned to their former menial employments or appeared as botanics, professing to use only vegetable remedies. Latterly they call themselves Eclectics, claiming to have especial faculties for selecting remedies and practicing on safe principles. The whole of this system owes whatever of temporary success it has met with, to its false promises and impositions upon the public.

Who can be better entitled to the term Eclectic than the true physician, who selects his remedies from any and every source; having no prejudice but against the false — no preference but for the truth?

There are other false theories which make captive silly women and more foolish men, and which will trouble you in your future career, but their antagonism to truth is so apparent that there is no danger of any permanent mischief therefrom.

It is your duty as well as for your interest to enlighten those with

whom you come in contact, as to matters which concern their health and its preservation. This is to be done only by candidly bringing to their view the facts in regard to which there is no question. Convince them that Medicine rests on a basis of truth, and that all the systems of quackery contain at best but little truth to an immense bulk of falsehood.

The fact that most diseases are self-limited and will recover if carefully nursed and left unembarrassed by drugs, is in itself sufficient to prove that the boasted cures by the globules of homœopathy and the lobelia and capsicum of Samuel Thomson are really so many evidences of the recuperative energies of the human system and its endurance when abused.

Allow me to mention a few results to which it is hoped the truth will lead you.

It will lead you to avoid excessive medication. The lancet and the list of heroic remedies are much less frequently resorted to now than twenty years ago; not because our opinions of their powers have changed, but because we have learned that they are not often needed; that in most cases rest, abstinence, and a careful attention to the condition of the several secretory functions of the body, are all that is needed to restore the sick to health. To know when these mild measures are sufficient, and *when* and *how* to apply more active and violent remedies is the province of the true physician.

When the safety of your patient demands active treatment, the truth will lead you to put your trust in those remedies which have proved worthy. When the life of a fellow being hangs upon your decision, it is no time to tamper with crude speculations or specious analogical deductions. You know what you can do with the lancet, the warm bath, opium, calomel, antimony, ipecac, quinine, and brandy, and while in these you have what you need in a case, why should you go prospecting over the whole domain of creation, in search of something new? Are there better narcotics than opium? Time, with the permission of Divine Providence, will make them known. Are there better remedies than those in which we have confidence? The Almighty Ruler of the Universe will make them known in his own good time and way, but wickedly false is he who rashly experiments upon suffering humanity, and perils the lives of his patients to prove his conjectures or to hunt out new remedies.

But be not too conservative ; seek for the truth wherever found, and in however bad company it may be detected. The virtues of lobelia are none the less because they were developed by the foolhardy practices of Samuel Thompson. No true man will be deterred from making free use of water because a class of imposters profess to cure all diseases by its exclusive use. Nor, however much we may lament the numerous lives sacrificed by imposters, should we neglect to possess ourselves of every truth developed by the imposition. There have been knaves and dupes in all ages, and it is our duty to learn from their dishonesty and foolishness how to be serviceable to those who are better and wiser.

The truth will lead you to exert its mighty power upon the mental and moral as well as physical welfare of your patients. Not to make an hypocritical manifestation of a religious interest that you do not feel ; but feeling and acting upon the power of truth, infuse its spirit into your patients.

Finally, the truth will determine your standing professionally and as men among men. However low in the scale of humanity may be those with whom your professional duties may bring you in contact, it will be at a time when they need and demand the truth, and they will accept or reject your ministrations just as they think you true or false.

If the bad demand truth in a physician, how much more do the good ? How can you expect those who cannot tolerate falsehood when well, to endure it when ill ; and who can mask himself so closely as to escape the scrutiny of the sharpened faculties of the sick ?

Gentlemen : — many of you I have here met for the first time ; allow me to beg of you so to conduct yourselves as true men and true physicians, that we may finally again meet where truth is unmolested by falsehood, and where only those who have maintained its power can gain admission.